

For immediate release — Thursday, May 21, 2026

Academic Writing Program instructor Rebekah Eckert earns 2026 Excellence in Teaching Award

Rebekah Eckert understands students in her Academic Writing classes are much more than learners; they are human beings with their own goals, challenges and voices. The genuine care she brings to the classroom has earned Eckert recognition as the University of Lethbridge's 2026 Excellence in Teaching Award winner.

As an instructor in the Academic Writing Program, Eckert brings a wide range of experience to her teaching, enabling her to take a flexible approach in engaging with her students, providing them choices in writing tools while ensuring each student develops their own voice as a writer. Eckert will be recognized for her efforts at Spring 2026 Convocation, Ceremony II, Thursday, May 28, 2:30 p.m., at the Co-op Centre for Sport & Wellness.



Rebekah Eckert

Rebekah Eckert's teaching philosophy has developed through a diverse range of work experiences with people from all walks of life. She has worked with inner-city children, women in conflict with the law, both in and outside of jail, refugees and immigrants learning English, church youth groups, women in recovery from abuse and people dealing with illness and grief.

As a result, she recognizes students as fellow human beings with their own hopes and desires and sees relating to each other as companions on the journey as the primary task. Eckert works to know who her students are and that they know what they bring to the course is valued.

In teaching her students about academic writing, Eckert takes a flexible approach and introduces them to a range of tools used by good writers from which students can choose. Beyond the tools, students also learn to create their own voice as writers.

Eckert uses explicit instruction in her teaching, structuring the course so all students can succeed. Many students come to the class assuming they are poor writers, but Eckert works to

overcome barriers — whether structural or personal — and believes that any student can improve.

She gives students plenty of exercises and opportunities to practice through in-class writing assignments, reading quizzes, Moodle quizzes and handwritten pieces. This allows students to gain confidence as they apply what they are learning in small, incremental ways.

With the advent of Large Language Models (LLMs) and artificial intelligence (AI), the temptation is ever-present to outsource thinking and let AI produce the needed academic paper. Eckert stresses to her students that creativity and critical thinking are essential human skills that are the foundation of academic writing and will always be in demand. Eckert has found that students generally aren't able to evaluate the work of an LLM, and using AI robs them of the opportunity to build their cognitive abilities.

Eckert recognizes that many of her students are at a stage of life where they are creating their future. They are often emerging into adulthood, or they may be caught in oppression, be that the effects of colonialism, extractive capitalism or internal family systems. Assignments in Eckert's class help students consider what their future might look like.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/academic-writing-program-instructor-rebekah-eckert-earns-2026-excellence-teaching-award>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.